

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, December 18, 2015

Present: M. Abiad, M. Al-Ghoul, V. Araman, Y. Asfour (on invitation), B. Bashour, A. Chalak, S. Chahine, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, H. El-Rassy, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, S. Kanj, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (Chair), F. Maalouf, P. McGreevy, F. Moukallad (representing Dean Suidan), W. Nasr, T. Nizameddin, I. Saoud, S. Saleh, M. Sayegh, E. Shammas, C. Smith, R. Smith

Absent: G. Araj*, J. Chaaban*, M. Clinton*, H. Diab*, E. Hitti, D. Jamali*, G. Kanazi, R. Karami*, T. Mehmood Ali*, I Nuwayhid*, M. Salameh, M. Suidan, A. Taher*, S. Zeineldine*

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm. The President welcomed Dean S. Harvey, the new dean of OSB.

1) Approval of the minutes of November 27, 2015

The minutes were approved with no amendments.

2) Election of a Senate representative to the Financial Planning Committee

President Khuri explained the purpose of the committee and the need to shift eventually to a five-year budget for the university. E. Shammas (FEA) was nominated to serve as Senate representative to the Financial Planning Committee and his nomination was approved by acclamation.

3) Updated Faculty Development Policy

Dean Hwalla, as chair of PPRC, provided a summary of the main changes to the document including (a) an increase in the travel allowance ceiling; (b) the fact that no receipts (except boarding passes) will be required to be submitted; (c) that there is no upper limit on the conference registration fee, and that (d) airport transportation is not included as part of the per diem. She also noted that the committee only looked at the policy, not the associated process. A motion was made **to approve the amendments to the Faculty Development Policy**. President Khuri explained that there was no need for administrative personnel to spend time checking receipts. A senator commended the new policy and asked whether the travel policy would be amended accordingly, noting that the travel policy relates to travel on grants and that many donors would prefer a per diem policy. Dean Hwalla commented that there is no per diem on grants, and that every grant has its own requirements and therefore it is not possible to have one policy govern all. She committed to *action point to verify whether the policy needs to follow the grants policy*. Another senator asked if the increase in the ceiling will make it more competitive. Dean McGreevy noted that unless the travel budget increases, effectively it will be more competitive. The President clarified in reply to a question that the policy also applies to the Faculty of Medicine. **Vote 2016-11: The motion passed unanimously.**

4) Proposed Amendment to Senate By-Laws

This item was introduced at the Senate. The President made a motion **to amend the Senate By-laws according to the attachment circulated that contains a proposal to amend Article IV, Section I of the Senate By-laws to replace item b. "Faculty members in the professorial ranks who have not been successful in promotion and are in their terminal year in rank shall not serve on departmental, faculty or university committees (by action of the Senate on 01/04/05) " by the following text: "Faculty members in the professorial ranks who have not been successful in promotion and are in their terminal year in rank may continue to serve on Department, Faculty and University Committees but must recuse themselves from meetings dealing with personnel matters for an equivalent rank or higher."** In discussion, Dean McGreevy stated that the intention behind the policy was that if a faculty member was not promoted, however hard that reality is, it is deemed that they should not have a say in determining the future of their department. Others disagreed stating that faculty members should be entrusted to act responsibly until they leave. One senator noted that such faculty members can feel bitter if they are deprived of voting privileges after many years of service, when someone who had recently joined the department does vote. President Khuri noted that in a future era of tenure, it is important not to deprive faculty members of a voice. A senator commented that in small departments, allowing someone denied promotion a vote could pose problems, although their feedback could be important. An alternative language was proposed that they should "recuse themselves in dealing with personnel matters" which was generally preferred. The President stated that it will be voted on at the next Senate meeting. Dean Hwalla noted that addition to the change in the Senate bylaws, the Unified Faculty' bylaws should be modified and voted upon to reflect the changes made.

5) Faculty Contracts

President Khuri briefed the Senate on the outcome of the negotiations, and thanked all those involved. He noted that the contract is better both for the faculty and for the university. E. Shammas, as chair of SCFA, made a motion **to recommend to the President approval of the Faculty Appointment Letter template circulated to AUB faculty on December, 2015 and marked as "December 7, 2015 – DRAFT."** A senator raised a question as to why it is an improvement, when an earlier contract referred to "under the terms of your appointment" and thus benefits could not be changed while the person concerned is employed at AUB. By contrast, the new contract only refers to the term of the contract. EVP Sayegh stated that in a previous version of the contract HIP and retirement benefit could have been changed by the university, and now they cannot be changed unless the university faces financial distress; perhaps in the next iteration it would be for the duration of employment. Another senator stated that no administration would be likely to reduce benefits for minor savings. A senator involved in the negotiations stated that termination without cause was removed, and acknowledged the role of Faculty United in the negotiations with the administration. He stated, however, that this was not collective bargaining, and at the end of the day the contract is an individual contract with the organization. **Vote 2016-12: The motion was unanimously approved.** It was confirmed that all faculty members would be given the option of switching to this contract if they so desired, with the same period as their current contract. A motion was made **to recommend that all faculty members be given the option to sign the new Faculty Appointment Letter template, as soon as it comes into effect, if they wish to replace their existing contract and to further recommend that new appointment and reappointments will follow the new contract. Vote 2016-13: The motion was approved.** The President stated that the revised

contract would be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on December 21 for approval.

6) Update on interdisciplinary programs

Interim Provost M. Harajli gave a requested update on interdisciplinary programs. He stated that DUIP was established by the previous administration but was currently frozen due to the fact that the administration assessed its governance structure and found it to be inconsistent with that of AUB; in particular it was acting like a faculty in hiring faculty members who did not have voting rights within a department and it could admit students without going back to Deans. The existing interdisciplinary programs have been re-housed – with Energy Studies now housed in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at FEA and Public Policy and International Affairs in PSPA of FAS. Work is now ongoing to come up with a governance strategy and when this work is finished there is an intention to re-integrate these programs into DUIP. There are 7 programs that are eligible to be considered for DUIP. The President stated that when it became evident that a faculty appointment has not been reviewed by any faculty and without a decision by a department, there was concern. At Emory University there was no interdisciplinary program that could appoint faculty without a home department. The administration wants to encourage interfaculty appointments and programs but there is a need for primary appointments in the faculties. The administration is not discouraging interdisciplinarity but is studying the matter. M. Harajli pointed out that there also exist successful interdisciplinary programs that are not housed within DUIP. A senator, stating he had no conflict of interest, reminded the Senate that the DUIP had been approved by the Senate and Board of Trustees, after 3-5 years of discussions. He remarked that it is normal to revise governance structures, but the way in which this occurred, in the summer, raises questions, and it is beneficial for the Senate to hear the reasons behind the change and about the future direction. If there occurred problems with governance, these could be resolved but it is not a reason to re-house programs so abruptly. M. Harajli stated that there is a commitment to revisit the issue, but that in some cases departments will be strengthened by the re-housing of programs. The President stated that in some American universities, moving towards centers has weakened academic departments, and that building and strengthening the centers should be undertaken judiciously. Dean Hwalla stated that if centers are overdeveloped they will deprive academic programs of resources. The President reiterated that the DUIP is frozen, not closed.

7) Compensation Task Force

Interim Provost M. Harajli gave a powerpoint presentation summarizing the findings of the Compensation Task Force formed by former President Dorman in 2014 and chaired by the former Provost. Its charge was a) to review current compensation policies and practices for faculty; b) do a comparative analysis of AUB salaries; and c) recommend salary ranges and a sustainable plan for redressing outliers and inequities over a time-frame of 3-5 years. The benchmarks used were CUPA, AAUP; LAU and LU in Lebanon and regionally, Qatar and KSA. In general, salaries had kept pace with increases in the consumer price index used with some exceptions in FAS. The recommendations were for Deans to review outliers on a case by case basis, for adjustments to be made that can be accommodated within the university budget, to review AUB salaries every 5 years and to separate the cost of living adjustment from the merit increase. FM salaries were not included because of the difficulty of benchmarking clinical salaries. EVP Sayegh stated that only basic science salaries are guaranteed by the university for those concerned, but for the vast majority of FM faculty, their salary

depends on clinical productivity. According to Lebanese law, clinical income is separated and only the component of salary related to teaching and administration is guaranteed. The MPP is a separate budget, not at the cost of the university and thus professional fees of doctors are not part of the AUBMC budget. The President further explained that in 1999-2000, there was a decision to de-couple medical salaries from income to guarantee a small base but with a variable based on clinical income. In discussion senators commented that AUB is after all one university, and it is still useful to attempt to benchmark, that the salaries FM faculty derive still depend on being employed at AUB, and asked how the Faculty of Medicine decides if someone's salary is fair. EVP Sayegh stated that it depends both on specialty, and even sub-specialty, and location, and that on both counts there is a large variability. The President stated that it should be possible to select some examples to attempt to benchmark in context. In further discussion of the task force work, a senator raised questions about the use of the average for CUPA as benchmark given that it represents over 600 colleges, and questioned the use of the consumer price indices chosen, since these underestimate changes in property/rental prices. Another senator commented that using averages is acceptable so long as confidence intervals are given. Further discussion followed on gender disparities in salary, which were noted to be consistent across the university. The President noted that this was one reason why he convened a Task Force on Lives and Careers of Women Faculty at AUB. Dean Hwalla asked if salaries should be consistent within disciplines even if in different faculties – for example should an engineer employed in FAFS be paid the same as in FEA? Another senator asked about the action plan for following up on the recommendations. The President stated that the plan is to focus first on the inequities concerning associate professors in FAS. The focus now is on making long-term budget projections based on the strategic plans of deans.

The President thanked all senators for their hard work.

Item 8 (State of IT) was deferred for lack of time. There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

(Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate)